

## News

**Seventeenth-Century Imprints on the Antiquarian Book Market****Brett-Smith Library Auction, Sotheby's (Spring, 2004)**

The John R.B. Brett-Smith Library, a collection long distinguished for its holdings in early-modern English books and manuscripts, was the subject of much chat this past spring in London. The library's auction on 27 May 2004 (641 lots) attracted an exuberant mix of international collectors, dealers, and institutions. Bidding was vigorous, bringing in a stunning grand total of £761,582, well above the pre-sale estimate.\* The auction's strong results testify to the continuing commercial appreciation of these early imprints for rare book collectors and financial investors, as well as their special significance for students of Book History. The most noteworthy, high-end sales, particularly those of pre-Restoration imprints, are as follows:

John Donne's *Poems, By J.D. with Elegies on the Authors Death* (quarto, first ed., 1633; John Marriot imprint); this copy of the first edition of Donne's collected poems brought £15,600 from "an overseas dealer"; the auction catalogue features a handsome full-page photo of the title-page (106).

David Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* (folio, first ed., 1675), contemporary Oxford binding by Roger Bartlett, in blue morocco, tooled in gilt; engraved throughout (39 double-pages and one folding plate by Loggan), being illustrations of Oxford, its libraries, theatres, and sites; with presentation inscription from the Master and Fellows, Pembroke College, Oxford, to Sir John Benet; fetched £9000 from a "Continental dealer."

\*Sale figures cited here include the usual surcharge or buyer's premium.

*George Herbert and Richard Crashaw*. Two works in one volume. Herbert's *The Temple* (duodecimo, sixth ed., 1641; University of Cambridge: Roger Daniel) and Crashaw's *Steps to the Temple* (duodecimo, 2nd ed., 1648, Moseley imprint); in contemporary Parisian mottled calf, for John Evelyn, whose crest appears (center oval) on the top board. A special offering that brought £6600.

Andrew Marvell's posthumous *Miscellaneous Poems* (folio, first ed., 1681; Boulter imprint), with engraved frontis of Marvell; provenance, Wm Stirling Maxwell; "one of the major poetical publications of the seventeenth century" (auction catalogue, p. 196); sold at £5760.

Henry Vaughan's *Silurist...Poems and Translations* (octavo, first ed., 1651; Moseley imprint). With additional engraved title by Robert Vaughan. Provenance: Harold Greenhill; H. Bradley Martin; sold at £4200.

John Milton's *Paradise Lost...in Twelve Books* (folio, fourth ed., 1688; Jacob Tonson imprint); the first illustrated edition (twelve engraved plates), with engraved frontis of Milton by White after Faithorne; provenance, Philip Hofer, with Hofer book-label; sold at £3120.

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Restoration imprints also made a strong showing. The top sale, £39,600, from an unidentified London dealer, was a bound manuscript volume (some 85 pages) of twenty-four uncollected verses by Anne Wharton. This is a major contribution to the canon of Englishwomen's writing in the second half of the seventeenth century, and it surely invites an updated edition and reassessment of Wharton. Sales in Dryden were predictably high: a first edition of *MacFlecknoe* (quarto, 1682) went to an "overseas collector" for £21,600; Dryden's *Poems and Letters* (octavo, 1685), brought £14,400 from "a London dealer." Other sales of note include the Britwell Court copy of Sarah Egerton's *Female Advocate* (1686),

her famous reply to Robert Gould's *Love Given O're* (1682), fetching £5040 from "a private library." Also to this same buyer went Katherine Philips' *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus* (2nd ed., 1729), at £4800, and at £3360 the Sir Edmund Gosse copy, with bookplate, of the elegant octavo, *Female Poems...by Ephelia* (1679), attributed to Mary Stuart *née* Villiers, Duchess of Richmond (*ESTC* R21721, R40072, NAFL8557363; see also *SCN* [vol. 52, Spring-Summer 2004, 119-123] and a multimedia archive at <http://www.millersville.edu/~resound/ephelia/>). The Lord Rolle (Bicton Library) copy of a first edition of Jane Barker's *Poetical Recreations* (1688), with bookplate, sold for £2880.

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Offerings in other Restoration figures – Behn, Buckingham, Anne Killigrew, L'Estrange, Mulgrave, Rochester, Sedley, Wincherley, *et al.*—are listed in the Author Index of the auction catalogue (341-46).

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For further details on the auction's offerings and the history of the Brett-Smith Library, see Sotheby's handsomely illustrated auction catalogue (366 pages), compiled by Peter Beal, Peter Selley, Tessa Milne, and Philip W. Errington, an essential bibliographical resource for seventeenth-century specialists. See also, Sotheby's online 'Auctions Results' and Sotheby's 'Press Releases,' as well as Ian McKay's illustrated coverage of the auction in *The Antiques Trade Gazette* (3 July 2004), pages 49-50 (with correction addendum, 24 July 2004, page 3). James E. May's popular column, "Scribleriana Transferred," hosted by the scholarly journal, *Scriblerian*, also will report on this important London auction.

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